

Bexar Area Agency on Aging

A diabetes prevention program in the city of San Antonio, Texas is taking the You Can! message to a group of Hispanic seniors. Project SIEN (Seniors Involved in Exercise and Nutrition) is a collaboration between the Bexar Area Agency on Aging and key community partners. Together they provide low-fat, reduced sugar meals along with instructor-led exercise sessions to six nutrition sites two to three times per week. Peer leaders identified at each nutrition site also provide leadership and encouragement.



Project SIEN is modeled after interventions identified in the very successful Diabetes Prevention Project national research study. The Texas Diabetes Institute, a program of the local hospital district, has proved to be a key partner in this effort, identifying and screening the participants that are at high risk for the onset of Type II diabetes and conducting nutrition and health education classes. Other key partners include the City of San Antonio Elderly and Disabled Services Division, and OASIS.



Encouraged by the success of Project SIEN, Bexar Area Agency on Aging is currently developing a toolkit so that the program may be easily replicated in other communities.

Partners are also achieving success because of this collaboration. The Texas Diabetes Institute has been able to expand its programs into the community, which has led to collaboration in other areas, such as medication management classes.

Program staff report that the commitment of the senior center manager is crucial to encouraging participation. It is the enthusiasm of program participants, however, that has been key to the program's success.